DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 645 UD 020 237

AUTHOR Ogletree, Earl J.; Allen, Betty J.
TITLE Urban Teachers Evaluate Inservice Meetings.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 13p.; Not available in paper copy due to reproduction quality of original document

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *Inservice Programs; *Inservice Teacher Education; Professional Training; Surveys; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Improvement; Teacher Morale
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois (Chicago)

ABSTRACT

A survey of fifty-one elementary school teachers in Chicago regarding their feelings about inservice meetings indicated that: (1) a majority of teachers believed that the objectives of such meetings were not clearly defined; (2) they reported that there was no follow-up or evaluation of the meetings; (3) they generally felt that the meetings were irrelevant in terms of their professional tasks and classroom problems; and (4) they believed that there were insufficient orientation information and activities for new teachers. They recommended that inservice meetings be planned cooperatively by all participants, and that such meetings be task and activity oriented. (Author/WP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Earl J. Ogletree
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED183645

URBAN TEACHERS EVALUATE INSERVICE MEETINGS

Earl J. Ogletree
Betty J. Allen

In-service education is a vital part of the educational process for classroom teachers. The professional preparation of teachers is a continuing process, and self renewal must occur if teachers are to remain abreast of the changing needs of society and the students. Effective in-service programs should help the teacher meet these changing needs.

In-service education has been defined as all the activities that teachers engage in during their service as a teacher, designed to improve their competence and effectiveness in the school (1). It can include travel, professional reading, workshops, university courses and professional meetings in the school organized by administrators and/or teachers.

In-school in-service meetings are generally implemented to develop common educational objectives, to inform and to institute curricular and program changes. However, there is a question as to the relevancy and effectiveness of in-service meetings to the classroom teacher.

Too often in-service meetings ignore the practical classroom needs of the teachers in terms of developing techniques of classroom management and teaching skills. Instead the meetings attempt to "stimulate interest in or provide overviews of new practices. The format is generally a lecture approach, rather than a participatory activity approach. Too often in-service meetings are administrative organized and oriented, with little or no teacher input.

UD020237

JAN 2 1 1980

ABSTRACT

How do inner-city teachers feel about in-service meetings? How can they be improved? To find these answers a questionnaire was given to fifty-one elementary school teachers. The findings showed the majority of teachers thought in-service meetings to be irrelevant, poorly planned, poorly organized and administrator oriented. The meetings lacked adequate evaluation follow-up procedures and provided no orientation information and activities for beginning or new teachers. Teachers recommended that that they be involved in the planning and organization of the meetings;, the meeting be task and activity oriented rather than lectures and be flexible.

Ruff agrees, "In-service education has been neither functional nor useful and most certainly has had little impact on the classroom teacher"(2). Because of the lack of relevancy and participation in in-service meetings, teachers either resent or are "psychological" absent from the meetings. Miller also states that in-service meetings that do not involve teachers in the planning, organization and implementation stages cannot be expected to bring about significant behavioral changes in the teacher(3). Hart maintains that administrators, who fear change and embrace the "status-quo" favor "low-impact" in-service meetings(4). Brimm and Tollett, who surveyed the attitudes of teachers toward in-service meetings, found that most in-service programs were poorly planned, inadequately executed and lacked valid evaluative procedures(5). The surveyed teachers strongly felt that they should have the opportunity to select the kind of in-service activities that will stregthen their professional competence and upgrade their classroom performances.

With the increasing demands made upon inner-city schools by society in the last decade, it is apparent that if schools are to meet these demands both administrators and teachers will have to work together to bring about the necessary changes. In-service meetings can be a viable vehicle for change, if properly used and if all parties are involved in the planning.

Curriculum and program changes are frequent occurances in inner-city schools. In-service meetings are essential for their implementation. Since, there have been few studies on the attitudes of teachers toward in-service meetings and none on the attitudes of inner-city teachers, the writers felt it necessary to investigate the opinions of Chicago inner-city teachers of in-service meetings. The study may give some indication why programs and curricular changes have little influence on the academic achievement of students.

Dissatisfaction with in-service training can influence implementation and effectiveness of any changes.

Statement Of Problem:

The purpose of this is to investigate the opinions of Chicago inner-city teachers toward in-service meetings. The study attempted to answer the following general questions:

1. Are in-service meetings well organized and objectives clearly defined?
2. Are in-service meetings relevant to teachers?
3. What recommendations are needed to make in-service meetings more relevant?
4. Should teachers be compensated for in-service meetings, and when should the meetings be scheduled?

Population and Procedures:

A thirty-two item attitude inventory was administered to sixty-five randomly selected elementary teachers from five innercity Chicago schools. (The attitude inventory is a revised form of questionnaire used by Brimm and Tollett[5].) The thirty-two questions, which were categorized to provide information for the general questions, had alternative responses of agree, disagree and uncertain. Of the sixty-five attitude inventories distributed, fifty-one or seventy-nine percent were returned. The data were tabulated by the percent of responses to each question.

Results

The findings show that the fifty-one teachers were basically dissatisfied with the in-service meetings. In Table I, seventy-three percent of the teachers felt there was not enough teacher involvement, and eighty-six percent indicated little or no evaluative follow-up.

This dissatisfaction is supported by fifty-seven percent of the teachers who thought the meeting objectives were not clearly defined and the additional twenty-four percent who were uncertain of the objectives. The fact that at least three-fourths of the teachers felt that the administration, the basis of teaching dissatisfaction, organized and dominated the meetings indicates what is actually being done with and in the meetings is contrary to expected special orientation activities, applicable classroom experiences, and individual and small group activities. In general, the in-service meetings were administratively organized and oriented and poorly structured in terms of teacher needs.

TABLE I - THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES OF IN-SERVICE MEETINGS
(N=51)

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
1. In-service programs should include special orientation activities for the new classroom teacher.	100%	0%	0%
2. In-service programs should relate directly to problems encountered in the classroom.	78%	17%	5%
3. The primary purpose of in-service should be to upgrade teachers classroom performance.	88%	12%	0%
4. Teachers are involved in planning in-service programs at our school.	14%	73%	13%
5. Objectives of in-service meetings are clearly defined.	19%	57%	24%
6. The format of in-service meetings allows for teacher input and evaluation.	41%	59%	0%
7. We need to have more small group activities at in-service meetings.	71%	24%	5%

TABLE I - (Continued) - PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES OF IN-SERVICE MEETINGS (N=51)

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
8. There is adequate follow-up to determine the effects of in-service activities in my school	6%	86%	8%
9. Administrators organize in-service meetings.	78%	8%	14%
10. Administrators dominate in-service meetings.	73%	27%	0%

Table II shows that the greater percentage of teacher thought in-service meetings were, in the main, irrelevant to their needs. Seventy-one percent and seventy-one percent, respectively, felt that the meetings were not based on the needs and problems of teachers nor of help in coping with professional responsibilities. To fifty-six percent of the teachers, the meetings were useless, althugh they were divided on whether or not they liked to attend in-service meetings. These attitudes were supported by their negative responses to "adequacy of orientation for new teachers" (75 percent disagreed), relevancy of objectives (53 percent disagreed), and inadequate planning of meeting (65 percent agreed). Teachers' responses indicated a general dissatisfaction with in-service meetings.

TABLE II - THE PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO RELEVANCY OF IN-SERVICE MEETINGS FOR TEACHERS

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
1. In-service programs help teachers to cope with professional tasks more successfully.	17%	71%	12%
2. Our in-service programs arise from a study of the needs and problems of the teacher.	15%	79%	6%

TABLE II - (Continued) PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO RELEVANCY OF IN-SERVICE MEETINGS FOR TEACHERS

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
3. The level of transfer of concepts presented and skills taught in in-service programs to the problems of the daily classroom is high.	20%	63%	17%
4. Orientation activities for the new classroom teacher in my school are adequate.	8%	75%	17%
5. Most in-service programs do not seem well-planned.	65%	29%	6%
6. The objectives of in-service programs are relevant.	26%	53%	21%
7. Most in-service programs are virtually useless.	56%	29%	15%
8. Most teachers do not like to attend in-service activities.	49%	41%	10%

Teachers were asked to make recommendations as to what in-service meetings should consist of and how they could be made more relevant. Table III illustrates teacher participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of in-service meetings to be the major issues. Ninety-eight percent felt the activities in the meetings should be individualized in terms of interests and eighty-eight percent viewed in-service as a means of learning about new teaching practices or innovative programs. Although teachers were dissatisfied with in-service meetings, they felt the meetings could be made relevant by teacher participation through committees in cooperation with the administration.

TABLE III - THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS MAKE IN-SERVICE MEETINGS MORE RELEVANT

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
1. Teachers need to be involved in the developing of goals, activities and methods of evaluation for in-services.	100%	0%	0%
2. In-service programs should include activities which allow for the different interest which exist among teachers.	98%	2%	0%
3. The teacher should have the opportunity to select the kind of in-service activities which he feels will strengthen his professional competence.	88%	6%	6%
4. Every teacher should be required to participate in some in-services designed to build team spirit within the school.	80%	14%	6%
5. A committee of teachers in cooperation with administrators should organize and develop in-service meetings.	94%	6%	0%
6. In-service meetings should include opportunities to become acquainted with new teaching practices or innovative programs.	98%	2%	0%
7. In-service training seems to be more effective when the total school staff is simultaneously engaged in a given activity.	69%	20%	11%

Teachers had additional recommendations regarding scheduling of and compensation for attending in-service meetings. Table IV shows that teachers were divided (41-51 percent) on whether more in-service meetings should be held during the school day. Whereas only thirty-nine percent agreed that attendance should be manditory for district-wide meetings, whereas eighty-six percent agreed the meetings should be held at their particular school.

Convenience and location seem to be major considerations. This attitude is reflected in the seventy-nine percent rejection response to having three-hour in-service meetings after school.

However, eighty-eight percent felt teachers should receive release time for attending in-service meetings. Monetary compensation is also an important factor in that ninety-two percent favored remuneration for after-school meeting attendance. On the other hand, fifty-six percent rejected lane-placement credit, if the meetings were held on a district-wide basis. Convenience and location appeared to be more important than lane-placement credit.

TABLE IV - THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO SCHEDULING AND COMPENSATION FOR IN-SERVICE MEETINGS

	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
1. Attendance at district-wide in-service should be required.	39%	53%	8%
2. Teachers should receive lane-placement credit for participating in district-wide in-services.	27%	56%	17%
3. Teachers should receive release time for in-service meetings held during the school day.	88%	8%	4%
4. More in-services should be scheduled during the school day.	41%	51%	8%
5. Teachers should be paid for in-services held after school.	92%	3%	5%
6. Most in-service activities should be carried on within the particular school in which the teacher works	86%	2%	12%
7. In-service programs should be scheduled as three-hour sessions after school.	10%	79%	11%

Discussion Of Findings

The findings of this study substantiate the results obtained by Brim and Tollett [5], and the views of Ruff[2] and Miller [3] that in-service meetings are generally poorly planned and have little relevance to the needs of classroom teachers. The major findings of this study showed: 1) In-service meetings objectives were not clearly defined. The teachers felt that either they were not explicitly informed as to the goals of the meetings or it was the result of poor administrative planning which did not include teachers' interests or needs. 2) The lack of follow-up or evaluation of in-service meetings was a natural consequent of either undefined objectives, poor planning or lack of consideration for teachers' needs. 3) The majority of teachers felt the meetings to be irrelevant in terms of learning to cope with professional tasks and being based on their classroom problems and needs. This probably is the result of one-sided planning of administrators and the non-participation of teachers in the organization of the meetings. 4) There was little or no orientation activities for new teachers which again reflects the lack of proper planning and the consideration for the individual as well as group needs of teachers.

The findings show that teachers do not want to take full responsibility for planning and organization of meetings, but want to work cooperatively with the administration. In addition to considering teacher needs and interest, the meetings must be conveniently located, at their school. Monetary compensation and/or released-time are important considerations as to when in-service meetings should be held--released-time during the day and remuneration for after school. After school meetings, particularly extended ones, are unpopular.

Teachers not only viewed in-service meetings as a means of improving classroom competencies, but as a way to build team spirit in the school. It appears that properly planned and conducted in-service meetings could be the focal point for teacher/administration cooperation for the benefit of the students and the enforcement of the school milieu.

To accomplish this, in-service meeting should be 1) planned cooperatively by all participants, 2) problem based and task centered, 3) activity oriented, systematic and continuous, 4) individualized, 5) evaluated, based upon mutually agreed upon and understood criteria, and 6) flexible and modifiable to the needs of all participants.

Teacher in-service meetings that capitalize on the talents, strengths and needs of the participants can engender positive attitudes in the participants, which carry over into the classroom.

REFERENCES

1) Finch, Harold, Growth In-Service Education Programs, (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), p. 42.

2) Ruff, Thomas, "How to Use Consultants?", Educational Leadership Journal, Vol. 31 (March, 1974)

3) Miller, William, "In-Service Education--New Strategies and New Priorities," The School Administrator, Vol. 66 (June, 1974), pp. 18-19.

4) Hart, Helen, "Self Renewal: A Model", Educational Leadership Journal, Vol. 31 (March, 1974) pp. 499-502.

5) Brimm, Jack L. and Tollett, Daniel, "How Do Teachers Feel About In-Service Education?" Educational Leadership Journal, Vol. 31 (March, 1974), pp. 521-526.